

# How 5th and 6th Grade School Books Perceived Girls and Boys?

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## 1. Introduction

Currently, the necessity of inclusion of gender's equality dimension and the chances between men and women are considered as one of the quality criteria that must presided the elaboration of school manuals and other educative resources [1, 2, 3].

The school manuals, as pedagogical instruments are very important in the teach-learning process. They have a determinant role in the promotion of a more inclusive and equality education.

However, some studies demonstrated that the sexist and stereotypes conceptions reproduced by the dominant culture in school manuals, when propagated through illustrations, increase the inequalities of chances between boys and girls [4, 5, 6, 7, 8].

The **purpose** of this work was to evaluate if the illustrations of 5th and 6th grade school manuals of Physical Education reflect the equality of chances between boys and girls.

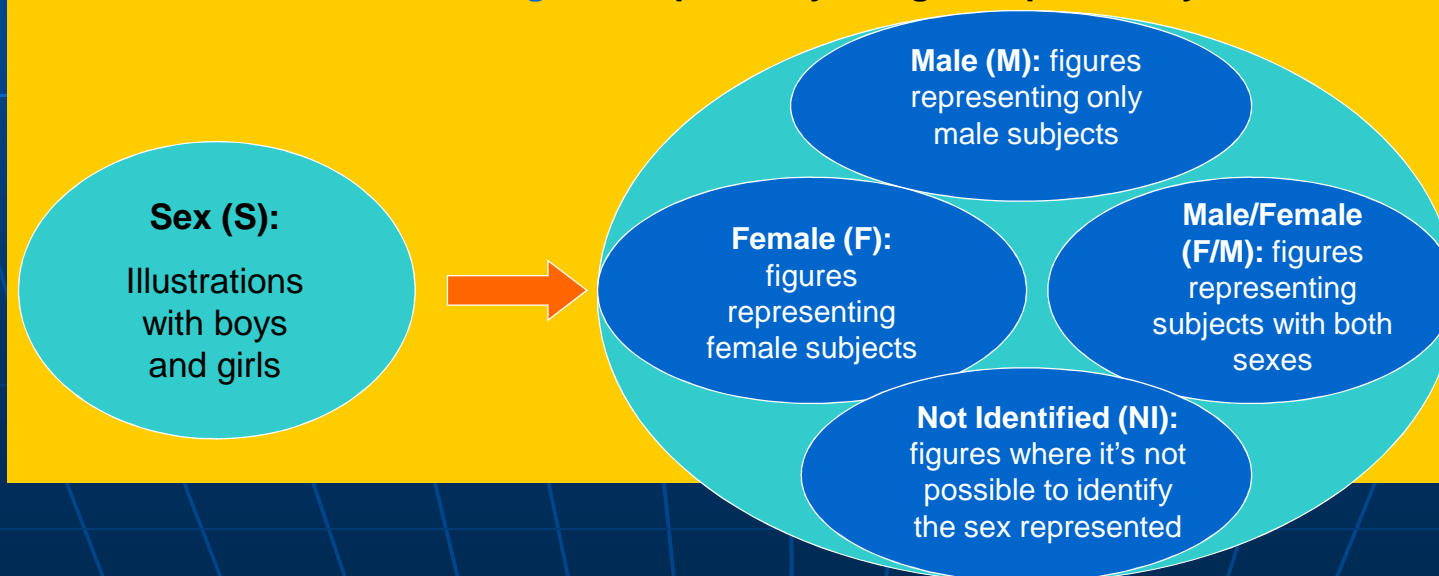
## 2. Methods

### Sample

Nine school manuals of PE of 5th and 6th grades, included in the list of manuals for the year 2003-2004, by the portuguese Department of Basic Education of the Ministry of Education, constituted the sample. A total of 2803 illustrations representing movements, technical elements and tactical situations had been analysed.

### Instrument

It was created an **observation grid** composed by categories previously defined:





For identification of each sub-category were used some standards previously defined.

## Accuracy



The accuracy intra-observer of the observation grid was evaluated using the **coefficient of correlation intra-observer [9]** in two school manuals for the sub-category M, in all thematic units. 72 hours was the period between the first and the second analysis of the illustrations.

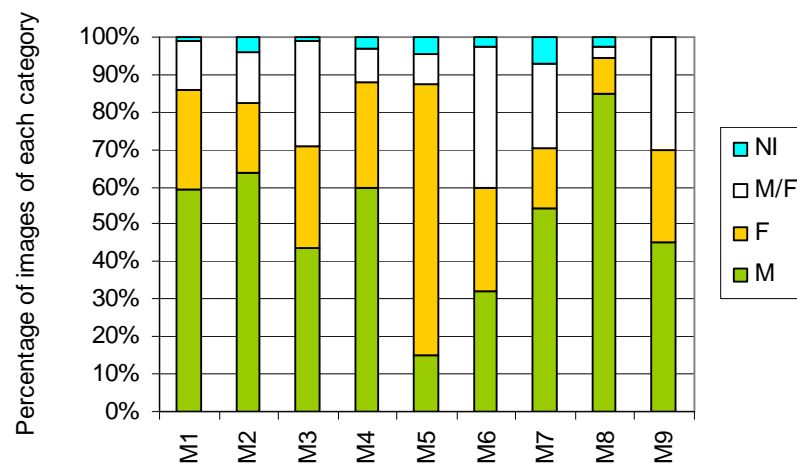
Manual 1	$25/29 \times 100 = 86\%$
Manual 2	$28/29 \times 100 = 96.5\%$

After, it was done a content analysis.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Frequency distribution of images of the sub-categories male (M), female (F), both sexes (M/F) and not identifies (NI) in the nine school manuals

The number of illustrations with male subjects was higher than the number of illustrations with feminine subjects. The only exception was the M5. The school manual with higher number of illustrations with both sexes was the M6 (37.6%) and the lowest the M8 (2.9%) – Graph 1.



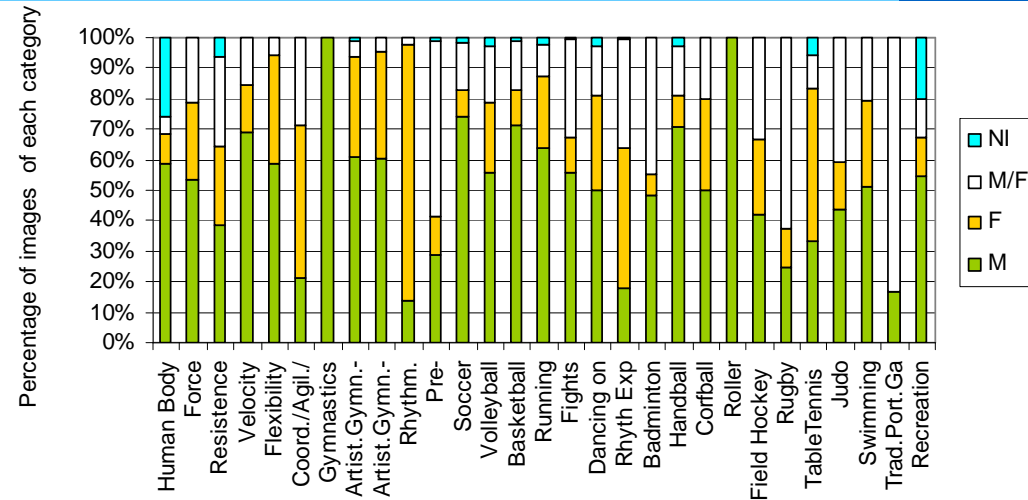
**Graph 1.** Frequency distribution of images of the sub-categories male (M), female (F), both sexes (M/F) and not identifies (NI) in the nine school manuals

With the exception of the school manual edited by “Constância Editores” (M6) all others reflect inequalities between sexes, presenting stereotyped images and broadcasting discriminatory practises including the M1 and M2 edited by the “Porto Editora”, leader in the business of school manuals in Portugal, from the 5th up to the 9th grade. – Graph 1.

This means that the only school manual that presented a balance between the three sub-categories (M, F and M/F) is edited by a publisher with a low share of the local market. Therefore, a small number of teachers and students posses such manual.

### 3.2. Frequency distribution of images of the sub-categories male (M), female (F), both sexes (M/F) and not identifies (NI) in all the thematic units analysed

The results revealed that In all motor capacities and sportive activities, exception to Coordination/Agility/Dexterity, Rhythmic Gymnastic, Rhythmic Activities and Table Tennis the male subjects presented a higher number of representations – Graph 2.



**Graph 2.** Frequency distribution of images of the sub-categories male (M), female (F), both sexes (M/F) and not identifies (NI) in all the thematic units analysed

All collective sports used male subjects in the illustrations. Usually, Volleyball is considered as a sport activity for both sexes [10]. Gymnastic exercises are also related to feminine sex [11] but the data revealed 100% of images with male sex. Pre-Sportive Games, Rugby and Traditional Portuguese Games presented a higher number of illustrations with both sexes (M/F). Badminton is frequently related to feminine subjects [11] but presented a significant number of illustrations with box sexes (M/F=44.8%) – Graph 2.

The images with subjects from masculine sex seems to appear associates with motor capacities and sport abilities. Force capacity, Soccer, Basketball, Fight, Roller Hockey, Field Hockey and Judo are usually associated to masculine sex. In the same way, Coordination/Agilities/Dexterity capacities, Rhythmic Gymnastics and Rhythmic and Expressive Activities are usually considered as female activities or sports – Graph 2.

### 3. Conclusions

The results revealed an obvious dichotomy between male and female representations. The male model is dominant in the several thematic units. Nevertheless, almost all school manuals presented female subjects with a higher or lower representation. This is a phenomena frequently reported in the literature [4, 5, 6, 7, 8].

The masculine and feminine sexes appears associates to certain thematic units as being proper of them culturally. It seems that the 5th and 6th grades school manuals of Physical Education reflect gender prejudices and stereotypes, putting in cause the equity and the equality of chances between boys and girls in this subject.

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